

THE WORDLESS BOOK

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A SERMON
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“Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”
Psalm 51:7

I DARESAY you have most of you heard of a little book which an old divine used constantly to study, and when his friends wondered what there was in the book, he told them that he hoped they would all know and understand it, but that there was not a single word in it. When they looked at it, they found that it consisted of only three leaves—the first was black, the second was red, and the third was pure white.

The old minister used to gaze upon the black leaf to remind himself of his sinful state by nature, upon the red leaf to call to his remembrance the precious blood of Christ, and upon the white leaf to picture to him the perfect righteousness which God has given to believers through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ His Son.

I want you, dear friends, to read this book this evening, and I desire to read it myself. May God the Holy Spirit graciously help us to do so to our profit!

I. First, LET US LOOK AT THE BLACK LEAF. There is something about this in the text, for the person who used this prayer said, “Wash me,” so he was black and needed to be washed. And the blackness was of such a peculiar kind that a miracle was needed to cleanse it away, so that the one who had been black should become white, and so white that he would be “whiter than snow.”

If we consider *David's case when he wrote this Psalm*, we shall see that he was very black. He had committed the horrible sin of adultery, which is so shameful a sin that we can only allude to it with bated breath. It is a sin which, involves much unhappiness to others besides the persons who commit it. And it is a sin which—although the guilty ones may repent—cannot be undone. It is altogether a most foul and outrageous crime against God and man—and they who have committed it do indeed need to be washed.

But David's sin was all the greater because of the circumstances in which he was placed. He was like the owner of a great flock, who had no need to take his neighbor's one ewe lamb when he had so many of his own. The sin in his case was wholly inexcusable, for he so well knew what a great evil it was.

He was a man who had taken delight in God's law, meditating in it day and night. He was, therefore, familiar with the commandment which expressly forbade that sin, so that, when he sinned in this way, he sinned as one does who takes a draft of poison, not by mistake, but well-knowing what will be the consequences of drinking it. It was willful wickedness on David's part for which there cannot be the slightest palliation.

Nay, more. Not only did he know the nature of the sin, but he also knew the sweetness of communion with God and must have had a clear sense of what it must have meant for him to lose it. His fellowship with the Most High had been so close that he was called “the man after God's own heart.” How sweetly has he sung of his delight in the Lord.

You know that, in your happiest moments, when you want to praise the Lord with your whole heart, you cannot find any better expression than David has left you in his Psalms. How horrible it is that the man who had been in the third heaven of fellowship with God should have sinned in this foul fashion!

Besides, David had received many providential mercies at the Lord's hands. He was but a shepherd lad, but God took him from feeding his father's flock and made him king over Israel. The Lord also delivered him out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, enabled him to overthrow and slay giant Goliath, and to escape the malice of Saul when he hunted him as a partridge upon the mountains. The Lord preserved him from many perils and at last firmly established him upon the throne—yet, after all these deliverances and mercies, this man, so highly favored by God—fell into this gross sin.

Then, also, it was a further aggravation of David's sin that it was committed against Uriah. If you read through the list of David's mighty men, you will find at the end the name of Uriah the Hittite—he had been with David when he was outlawed by Saul, he had accompanied his leader in his wanderings, he had shared his perils and privations, so it was a shameful return on the part of the king when he stole away the wife of his faithful follower who was at that very time fighting against the king's enemies.

Searching through the whole of Scripture, or at least through the Old Testament, I do not know where we have the record of a worse sin committed by one who yet was a true child of God. So David had good reason to pray to the Lord, "Wash me," for he was indeed black with a special and peculiar blackness.

But now, turning from David, let us consider *our own blackness in the sight of God*. Is there not, my dear friend, some peculiar blackness about your case as a sinner before God? I cannot picture it, but I ask you to call it to your remembrance now that your soul may be humbled on account of it. Perhaps you are the child of Christian parents, or you were the subject of early religious impressions, or it may be that you have been in other ways specially favored by God—yet you have sinned against Him, sinned against light and knowledge, sinned against a mother's tears, a father's prayers, and a pastor's admonitions and warnings.

You were very ill once and thought you were going to die, but the Lord spared your life and restored you to health and strength—yet you went back to your sin as the dog returns to his vomit, or the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. Possibly a sudden sense of guilt alarmed you, so that you could not enjoy your sin, yet you could not break away from them.

You spent your money for that which was not bread, and your labor for that which did not satisfy you, yet you went on wasting your substance with riotous living until you came to beggary—but even that did not wean you from your sin. In the house of God you had many solemn warnings and you went home again and again resolving to repent, yet your resolves soon melted away, like the morning cloud and the early dew—leaving you more hardened than ever.

I remember John B. Gough, at Exeter Hall, describing himself in his drinking days as seated upon a wild horse which was hurrying him to his destruction until a stronger hand than his own seized the reins, pulled the horse down upon its haunches, and rescued the reckless rider. It was a terrible picture, yet it was a faithful representation of the conversion of some of us.

How we drove the spurs into that wild horse and urged it to yet greater speed in its mad career until it seemed as if we would even ride over the gracious Being who was determined to save us! That was sin indeed, not merely against the dictates of an enlightened conscience and against the warnings which were being continually given to us, but it was what the apostle calls treading underfoot the Son of God, counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing and doing despite unto the Spirit of grace.

Let me, beloved, before I turn away from this black leaf, urge you to study it diligently, and to try to comprehend the blackness of your hearts, and the depravity of your lives. That false peace which results from light thoughts of sin is the work of Satan—get rid of it at once if he has wrought it in you. Do not be afraid to look at your sins, do not shut your eyes to them—for you to hide your face from them may be your ruin—but for God to hide His face from them will be your salvation.

Look at your sins and meditate upon them until they even drive you to despair. "What!" says one, "until they drive me to despair?" Yes. I do not mean that despair which arises from unbelief, but that self-despair which is so near akin to confidence in Christ. The more God enables you to see your emptiness, the more eager will you be to avail yourself of Christ's fullness.

I have always found that as my trust in self went up, my trust in Christ went down—and as my trust in self went down—my trust in Christ went up. So I urge you to take an honest view of your own blackness of heart and life, for that will cause you to pray with David, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Weigh yourselves in the scales of the sanctuary, for they never err in the slightest degree. You need not exaggerate a single item of your guilt, for just as you are you will find far too much sin within you if the Holy Spirit will enable you to see yourselves as you really are.

II. But now we must turn to the second leaf, THE BLOOD-RED LEAF OF THE WORDLESS BOOK, which brings to our remembrance the precious blood of Christ.

When the sinner cries, "Wash me," there must be some fount of cleansing where he can be washed "whiter than snow." So there is, for there is nothing but the crimson blood of Jesus that can wash out the crimson stain of sin. What is there about Jesus Christ that makes Him able to save all whom come unto God by Him?

This is a matter upon which Christians ought to meditate much and often. Try to understand dear friends, the greatness of the atonement. Live much under the shadow of the cross. Learn to—

*"View the flowing
Of the Savior's precious blood,
By divine assurance knowing
He has made your peace with God."*

Feel that Christ's blood was shed for you, even for you. Never be satisfied till you have learned the mystery of the five wounds. Never be content till you are "able to comprehend with all saints what is the breath, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

The power of Jesus Christ to cleanse from sin must lie, first, in the greatness of His person. It is not conceivable that the sufferings of a mere man, however holy or great he might have been, could have made atonement for the sins of the whole multitude of the Lord's chosen people. It was because Jesus Christ was one of the persons in the divine Trinity.

It was because the Son of Mary was none other than the Son of God, it was because He who lived, and labored, and suffered, and died was the Great Creator, without whom was not anything made that was made, that His blood has such efficacy that it can wash the blackest sinners so clean that they are "whiter than snow."

The death of the best man who ever lived could not make an atonement even for his own sins, much less could it atone for the guilt of others. But when God Himself "took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" and "humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," no limit can be set to the value of the atonement that He made.

We hold most firmly the doctrine of particular redemption, that Christ loved His church and gave Himself for it. But we do not hold the doctrine of the limited value of His precious blood. There can be no limit to deity—there must be infinite value in the atonement which was offered by Him who is divine. The only limit of the atonement is in its design, and that design was that Christ should give eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him—but in itself the atonement is sufficient for the salvation of the whole world—and if the entire race of mankind could be brought to believe in Jesus, there is enough efficacy in His precious blood to cleanse everyone born of woman from every sin that all of them have ever committed.

But the power of the cleansing blood of Jesus must also lie in the intense sufferings which He endured in making atonement for His people. Never was there another case like that of our precious

Savior. In His merely physical sufferings there may have been some who have endured as much as He did, for the human body is only capable of a certain amount of pain and agony—and others beside our Lord have reached that limit.

But there was an element in His sufferings that was never present in any other case. The fact of His dying in the room, and place, and stead of His people—the one great sacrifice for the whole of His redeemed—makes His death altogether unique, so that not even the noblest of the noble army of martyrs share the glory with Him.

His mental suffering also constituted a very vital part of the atonement—the sufferings of His soul were the very soul of His sufferings. If you can comprehend the bitterness of His betrayal by one who had been His follower and friend, and of His desertion by all His disciples, His arraignment for sedition and blasphemy before creatures whom He had Himself made—if you can realize what it was for Him, who did no sin, to be made sin for us, and to have laid upon Him the iniquity of us all—if you can picture to yourself how He loathed sin and shrank from it, you can form some slight idea of what His pure nature must have suffered for our sakes.

We do not shrink from sin as Christ did because we are accustomed to it—it was once the element in which we lived, and moved, and had our being. But His holy nature shrank from evil as a sensitive plant recoils from the touch. But the worst of His sufferings must have been when His Father's wrath was poured out upon Him as He bore what His people deserved to bear—but which now they will never have to bear.

*“The waves of swelling grief
Did o'er His bosom roll,
And mountains of almighty wrath
Lay heavy on His soul.”*

For His Father to have to hide His face from Him so that He cried in His agony, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” must have been a veritable hell to Him. This was the tremendous draught of wrath which our Savior drank for us to its last dregs so that our cup might not have one drop of wrath in it forever. It must have been a great atonement that was purchased at so great a price.

We may think of the greatness of Christ's atonement in another way. It must have been a great atonement which has safely landed such multitudes of sinners in heaven, and which has saved so many great sinners, and translated them into such bright saints. It must be a great atonement which is yet to bring innumerable myriads into the unity of the faith and into the glory of the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven.

It is so great an atonement, sinner, that if you will trust to it, you shall be saved by it however many and great your sins may have been. Are you afraid that the blood of Christ is not powerful enough to cleanse you? Do you fear that His atonement cannot bear the weight of such a sinner as you are?

I heard, the other day, of a foolish woman at Plymouth who, for a long while, would not go over the Saltash Bridge because she did not think it was safe. When, at length, after seeing the enormous traffic that passed safely over the bridge, she was induced to trust herself to it, she trembled greatly all the time, and was not easy in her mind until she was off it. Of course, everybody laughed at her for thinking that such a ponderous structure could not bear her little weight.

There may be some sinner in this building, who is afraid that the great bridge which eternal mercy has constructed, at infinite cost, across the gulf which separates us from God, is not strong enough to bear his weight. If so, let me assure him that across that bridge of Christ's atoning sacrifice millions of sinners, as vile and foul as he is, have safely passed, and the bridge has not even trembled beneath their weight, nor has any single part of it ever been strained or displaced.

My poor fearful friend, your anxiety lest the great bridge of mercy should not be able to bear your weight reminds me of the fable of the gnat than settled on the bull's ear and then was concerned lest the powerful beast should be troubled by his enormous weight. It is well that you should have a vivid

realization of the weight of your sins, but at the same time you should also realize that Jesus Christ, by virtue of His great atonement, is not only able to bear the weight of your sins, but He can also carry—indeed, He has already carried upon His shoulders the sins of all who shall believe in Him right to the end of time—and He has borne them away into the land of forgetfulness, where they shall not be remembered or recovered forever. So efficacious is the blood of the everlasting covenant that even you, black as you are, may pray, with David, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

III. This brings me to THE WHITE LEAF OF THE WORDLESS BOOK, which is just as full of instruction as either the black leaf or the red one—“Wash me, and I shall be *whiter than snow*.”

What a beautiful sight it was, this morning, when we looked out and saw the ground all covered with snow! The trees were all robed in silver, yet it is almost an insult to the snow to compare it to silver, for silver at its brightest is not worthy to be compared with the marvelous splendor that was to be seen wherever the trees appeared adorned with beautiful festoons above the earth which was robed in its pure white mantle. If we had taken a piece of what we call white paper, and laid it down upon the surface of newly-fallen snow, it would have seemed quite begrimed in comparison with the spotless snow.

This morning’s scene at once called the text to my mind—“Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” You, O black sinner, if you believe in Jesus, shall not only be washed in His precious blood until you become tolerably clean, but you shall be made white, yea, you shall be “whiter than snow”.

When we have gazed upon the pure whiteness of the snow before it has become defiled, it has seemed as though there could be nothing whiter. I know that, when I have been among the Alps, and have for hours looked upon the dazzling whiteness of the snow, I have been almost blinded by it. If the snow were to lie long upon the ground, and if the whole earth were to be covered with it, we should soon all be blind.

The eyes of man have suffered with his soul through sin, and just as our soul would be unable to bear a sight of the unveiled purity of God, our eyes cannot endure to look upon the wondrous purity of the snow. Yet the sinner, black through sin, when brought under the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus, becomes “whiter than snow.”

Now, how can a sinner be made “whiter than snow”? Well, first of all, *there is a permanence about the whiteness of a blood-washed sinner which there is not about the snow*. The snow that fell this morning was much of it anything but white this afternoon. Where the thaw had begun to work, it looked yellow even where no foot of man had trodden upon it. And as for the snows in the streets of London, you know how soon its whiteness disappears.

But there is no fear that the whiteness which God gives to a sinner will ever depart from him—the robe of Christ’s righteousness which is cast around him is permanently white.

*“This spotless robe the same appears
When ruin’d nature sinks in years;
No age can change its glorious hue,
The robe of Christ is ever new.”*

It is always “whiter than snow.” Some of you have to live in smoky, grimy London, but the smoke and the grime cannot discolor the spotless robe of Christ’s righteousness. In yourselves, you are stained with sin, but when you stand before God, clothed in the righteousness of Christ, the stains of sins are all gone. David in himself was black and foul when he prayed the prayer of our text, but clothed in the righteousness of Christ, he was white and clean.

The believer in Christ is as pure in God’s sight at one time as he is at another. He does not look upon the varying purity of our sanctification as our ground of acceptance with Him—He looks upon the matchless and immutable purity of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He accepts us in Christ—and not because of what we are in ourselves. Hence, when we are once “accepted in the beloved,” we are permanently accepted. And being accepted in Him, we are “whiter than snow.”

Further, *the whiteness of snow is, after all, only created whiteness*. It is something which God has made, yet it has not the purity which appertains to God Himself. But the righteousness which God gives to the believer is a divine righteousness, as Paul says, “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

And remember that this is true of the very sinner who before was so black that he had to cry to God, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” There may be one who came into this building black as night through sin, but if he is enabled now, by grace, to trust in Jesus, His precious blood shall at once cleanse him so completely that he shall be “whiter than snow.”

Justification is not a work of degrees—it does not progress from one stage to another—but it is the work of a moment and it is instantaneously complete. God’s great gift of eternal life is bestowed in a moment and you may not be able to discern the exact moment when it is bestowed. Yet you may know even that, for as soon as you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are born of God, you have passed from death unto life, you are saved, and saved to all eternity.

The act of faith is a very simple thing, but it is the most God-glorifying act that a man can perform. Though there is no merit in faith, yet faith is a most ennobling grace, and Christ puts a high honor upon it when He says, “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.” Christ puts the crown of salvation upon the head of faith, yet faith will never wear it herself, but lays it at the feet of Jesus, and gives Him all the honor and glory.

There may be one in this place who is afraid to think that Christ will save him. My dear friend, do my Master the honor to believe that there are no depths of sin into which you may have gone which are beyond His reach. Believe that there is no sin that is too black to be washed away by the precious blood of Christ, for He has said, “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men,” and “all manner of sin” must include yours. It is the very greatness of God’s mercy that sometimes staggers a sinner.

Let me use a homely simile to illustrate my meaning. Suppose you are sitting at your table, carving the joint for dinner, and suppose your dog is under the table, hoping to get a bone or a piece of gristle for his portion? Now, if you were to set the dish with the whole joint on it down on the floor, he would probably be afraid to touch it lest he should get a cut of the whip. He would know that a dog does not deserve such a dinner as that—and that is just your difficulty, poor sinner, you know that you do not deserve such grace as God delights to give. But the fact that it is of grace shuts out the question of merit altogether. “By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” God’s gifts are like Himself—immeasurably great.

Perhaps some of you think you would be content with crumbs or bones from God’s table. Well, if He were to give me a few crumbs or a little broken meat, I would be grateful for even that, but it would not satisfy me. But when He says to me, “You are My son, I have adopted you into My family, and you shall go no more out forever,”

I do not agree with you that it is too good to be true. It may be too good for you, but it is not too good for God—He gives as only He can give. If I were in great need, and obtained access to the Queen, and after laying my case before her, she said to me, “I feel a very deep interest in your case, here is a penny for you,” I would be quite sure that I had not seen the Queen, but that some lady’s maid or servant had been making a fool of me.

Oh, no! the Queen gives as Queen, and God gives as God—so that the greatness of His gift, instead of staggering us, should only assure us that it is genuine and that it comes from God. Richard Baxter wisely said, “O Lord, it must be great mercy or no mercy, for little mercy is of no use to me!”

So, sinner, go to the great God with your great sin, and ask for great grace that you may be washed in the great fountain filled with the blood of the great sacrifice—and you shall have the great salvation which Christ has procured, and for it you shall ascribe great praise forever and ever to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God grant that it may be so, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 51

It is a Psalm and therefore, it is to be sung. It is dedicated to the chief Musician and there is music in it, but it needs a trained ear to catch the harmony. The sinner with a broken heart will understand the language and also perceive the sweetness of it—but as for the proud and the self-righteous, they will say, “It is a melancholy dirge,” and turn away from it in disgust.

There are times, to one under a sense of sin, when there is no music in the world like that of the fifty-first Psalm, and it is music for the chief Musician, for “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repented.” And this is the Psalm of penitence, and there is joy in it, and it makes joy even to the chief Musician himself.

Verse 1. *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.*

Here is a man of God, a man of God deeply conscious of his sin, crying for mercy, crying with all his heart and soul, and yet with his tear-dimmed eyes looking up to God, and spying out the gracious attributes of deity—lovingkindness, and tender mercies, multitudes of them. There is no eye that is quicker to see the mercy of God than an eye that is washed with the tears of repentance. When we dare not look upon divine justice—when that burning attribute seems as if it would smite us with blindness—we can turn to that glorious rainbow of grace round about the throne and rejoice in the lovingkindness and the tender mercies of our God.

2. *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

“If washing will not remove it, burn it out, O Lord, but do cleanse me from it. Not only from the guilt of it and the consequent punishment, but from the sin itself. Make me clean through and through. ‘Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.’”

3. *For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*

“As if the record of it were painted on my eyeballs, I cannot look anywhere without seeing it. I seem to taste it in my meat and drink. And when I fall asleep, I dream of it, for Your wrath has come upon me, and now my transgression haunts me wherever I go.”

4. *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.* [See sermon #86, Unimpeachable Justice]

This is the sting of sin to a truly penitent man—that he has sinned against God. The carnal mind sees nothing in that. If ever it does repent, it repents of doing wrong to man. It only takes the manward side of the transgression, but God’s child, though grieved at having wronged man, feels that the deluge of his guilt—that which drowns everything else—is that he has sinned against his God. It is the very token and type and mark of an acceptable repentance that it has an eye to sin as committed against God.

Now observe that the psalmist, having thus sinned, and being thus conscience of his guilt, is now made to see that, if the evil came out of him, it must have been in him at first—he would not have sinned as he had done had there not been an unclean fountain within him.

5-6. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts:—*

Then it is not sufficient for me to be washed outside, and being outwardly moral is not enough. “Thou desirest truth in the inward parts:”—

6. *And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*

In that part which is even hidden from myself, where sin might lurk without my knowing it, there would You spy it out. I pray You, Lord, eject all sin from me, rid me of the most subtle form of iniquity that may be concealed within me.

7. *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

This is a grand declaration of faith. I know not of such faith as this anywhere else. The faith of Abraham is more amazing, but to my mind, this faith of poor broken-hearted David, when he saw himself to be black with sin and crimson with crime, and yet could say, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," is grand faith. It seems to me that a poor, trembling, broken-down sinner, who casts himself upon the infinite mercy of God, brings more glory to God than all the angels that went not astray are ever able to bring to Him.

8. *Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we cannot sin with impunity. Worldlings may do so as far as this life is concerned, but a child of God will find that, to him, sin and smart, if they do not go together, will follow very closely upon one another's heels.

Ay, and our Father in heaven chastens His people very sorely, even to the breaking of their bones—and it is only when He applies the promises to our hearts by the gracious operation of His Holy Spirit and makes the chambers of our soul to echo with the voice of His lovingkindness, that we "hear joy and gladness again." It is only then that our broken bones are bound up and we begin to rejoice once more.

9. *Hide thy face from my sins,*

David could not bear that God should look upon them.

9. *And blot out all mine iniquities.*

"Put them right out of sight. Turn Your gaze away from them and then put them out of everybody's sight."

10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*

"Make me over again. Let the image of God in man be renewed in me. Nay, not the image only, but renew the very Spirit of God within me."

11-12. *Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me, restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;*

"Lift me up, and then keep me up. Let me never sin against You again."

12-13. *And uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways;*

There are no such teachers of righteousness as those who have smarted under their own personal sin—they can indeed tell others what the ways of God are. What are those ways? His ways of chastisement—how He will smite the wandering. His ways of mercy—how he will restore and forgive the penitent.

13. *And sinners shall be converted unto thee.* . [See sermon #1130, The Christian's Great Business]

He felt sure that they would be converted, and if anything can be the means of converting sinners, it is the loving faithful testimony of one who has himself tasted that the Lord is gracious. If God has been merciful to you, my brother or my sister, do not hold your tongue about it, but tell to others what He has done for you. Let the world know what a gracious God He is.

14. *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.* [See sermon #713, Soul-Murder—Who Is Guilty?]

I like that confession and that prayer of David. He does not mince matters, for he had guiltily caused the blood of Uriah to be shed, and here he owns it, with great shame, but with equal honesty and truthfulness. As long as you and I call our sins by pretty names, they will not be forgiven. The Lord knows exactly what your sin is, therefore do not try to use polite terms about it. Tell Him what it is, that He may know that you know what it is. "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation."

"But surely," says someone, "there is nobody here who needs to pray that prayer." Well, there is one in the pulpit, at least, who often feels that he has need to pray it, for what will happen if I preach not the Gospel or if I preach it not with all my heart? It may be that the blood of souls shall be required at my hands.

And my brothers and sisters, if anything in your example should lead others into sin, or if the neglect of any opportunities that are presented to you should lead others to continue in their sin till they perish,

will not the sin of bloodguiltiness be possible to you? I think you had better each one pray David's prayer, "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation." "And then, O Lord, if I once get clear of that, 'my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.'"

15. *O Lord, open thou my lips;*

He is afraid to open them himself lest he should say something amiss. Pardoned sinners are always afraid lest they should err again.

15-16. *And my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest no sacrifice; else would I give it:*

"Whatever there is in the whole world that You desire, I would gladly give it to You, my God."

16-18. *Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion:*

You see that the psalmist loves the chosen people of God. With all his faults, his heart is right towards the kingdom under his charge. He feels that he has helped to break down Zion, and to do mischief to Jerusalem, so he prays, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion:"

18-19. *Build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.*

Once get your sin forgiven and then God will accept your sacrifices. Then bring what you will with all your heart, for an accepted sinner makes an accepted sacrifice, through Jesus Christ.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.